



Hazard Mitigation

Emergency Management Division
Washington Military Department

Background

Following a presidential declaration of a major disaster, the state of Washington may be eligible to receive funds to eliminate or significantly reduce the impacts of disasters. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is authorized by Section 404 of Public Law 93-288, as amended, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. It is one part of the package of federal disaster assistance made available to eligible applicants in declared counties.

Purpose

The HMGP is designed to fund projects that will reduce the effects of hazards and/or vulnerability to future disaster damage. The HMGP will, within the limits of state and federal guidelines, help fund a wide range of new projects that reduce hazard vulnerability and the potential of damage.

Eligible Applicants*

State Government
Local Governments
Special Districts

Certain Nonprofit Organizations with
Like-Government Services & Facilities
Indian Tribes

*Individuals cannot apply directly for these funds; an eligible applicant must sponsor the project.

Funding Constraints

The total amount for the HMGP is very limited. The requests for HMGP funds have historically exceeded the available funding by a ratio of 10 to 1. According to the proposed law, FEMA may contribute a minimum of 7.5 percent of the amount that it will spend under the disaster assistance programs. In order to select projects for funding, all proposals are evaluated and scored against state and federal program criteria. Some of the general criteria are listed below. Funding for the grants normally will be 75% - Federal and 25% - Non Federal (applicant and State split). The grants will be made available to eligible applicants on a competitive basis.

Grant Process

- State conducts applicant briefings in impacted communities following disaster declaration.
- "Letters of Intent" (LOI) are submitted by eligible applicants.
- Following review of LOIs, HMGP applications are mailed to eligible applicants. Actual deadlines for return of applications vary by disaster.
- Applications are reviewed for eligibility and site visits conducted as required. Applications are then evaluated and scored by a work group of state and local representatives. Local representatives are from outside the declared disaster area(s). This process was developed with local input and assistance.
- Projects are then recommended to FEMA for approval and funding based upon score and available funds.

- Upon notification of approval and funding, a grant agreement between the state and applicant is developed.
- Depending upon the size and complexity of the project, final approval for funding by FEMA may take between 6 and 12 months.

Types of Eligible Projects

Following are examples of projects the HMGP can be used to fund:

- Structural hazard control, such as debris basins;
- Retrofitting, such as flood proofing to protect structures from future damage;
- Acquisition and relocation of structures from hazard-prone areas;
- Construction activities that will result in protection from hazards;
- Development of state and local standards to protect new and substantially improved structures from disaster damage.

All applications are first evaluated against a set of eligibility criteria as established in 44 CFR Sec. 206.434 and the state Hazard Reduction Plan. Some of the eligibility challenges are:

- Because federal funds are involved, all projects must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to include public involvement in the development and selection of the alternative solutions.
- Have the documented support of the local community and permitting agencies.
- Be determined to be the most practical, effective, and environmentally sound alternative among the possible options.
- Applicant must show that they have sufficient fiscal resources (local match) to initiate and complete the project.
- Project must demonstrate a sufficient Cost-to-Benefit ratio by showing that the solution addresses a problem that is repetitive, or that poses a significant risk if left unsolved, and will not cost more than the benefit provided.
- Applicant must be, or located in a community that is, participating and in good standing with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Project must provide a long-term solution (25+ years).
- Substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering from a major disaster.
- Cannot duplicate any other federal programs (Federal Highways, Corps of Engineers, etc). Federal funds from one program cannot be used as a match for other federal funds.
- Have manageable, future maintenance requirements.
- Solve a problem independently, without being dependent on other mitigation measures, such as structural flood control measures.
- Identified in the Local Hazard Reduction Plan.

Projects that do not meet the above eligibility criteria cannot be scored or evaluated.

Contact

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